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Ford, Church clash on overhaul of CIA

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senators drafting intelligence supervisory legislation appeared to abandon plans Friday to require the White House to give Congress prior notification of secret operations.

Meanwhile, Sen. Frank Church, chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, said President Ford's plans for reorganizing the intelligence community "show little interest in protecting citizens' rights."

Ford, campaigning in New Hampshire, insisted that "under the new organization with the new restrictions that I have applied there will be no abuses."

By a voice vote, the Senate Government Operations Committee deleted from a resolution to establish an intelligence monitoring committee a provision stating that no intelligence agency should undertake a covert operation "unless and until" the Senate "has been fully informed of the proposed activity." Members said the provision might be unconstitutional.

In its place, the committee adopted language that, according to a statement prepared by Sen. Charles Percy, R-Ill., would allow, but not require, prior notification "if a good working relationship is developed between the new committee and the executive branch."

Government Operations Chairman, Abraham Ribicoff, D-Conn., who introduced the amendment in Percy's absence, said both Church, whose committee wrote the original prior notification requirement, and the White House, which consistently has opposed prior notification, were prepared to accept the new language.

A visibly angered member of the intelligence committee staff said afterwards, "Church wants out of this thing so badly, he'd give away the store."

Other members of the committee staff insisted there had been no significant weakening of the prior notification requirement.

Church is expected to announce his candidacy for president next month. In the meantime, he has delegated the day-to-day workings of the intelligence panel to two subcommittees headed by Sens. Walter F. Mondale, D-Minn., and Walter Huddleston, D-Ky.